

Contribution Of Savitribai Phule to Women Empowerment, Education and Social Issues

Rani, Renu

Assistant Professor of Chemistry, Govt. College Hansi, Hisar

Abstract

This study aims to know about the feminist Savitribai Phule's contribution towards women's education and others social issues. Savitribai Jyotirao Phule was a renowned social activist, educationist and poet of India who did many drastic changes to society by her remarkable efforts. She had counted among well educated women and attributed for establishing the first girl's school in Pune in Bhide Wada. This was the great step which was taken by her to educate women. Her motivational ideas should be combined in education because she started a revolutionary wave in the existing period of several parts of education. She also took effort towards many social issues by running drive against child marriage, sati pratha and promoting widow remarriage. She did not stop herself and keep doing campaigning against many other issues like untouchability and worked actively in stopping caste and gender-based discrimination. Savitribai Phule was the first lady teacher of India but along with this she was also known as the first Marathi poetess and inspirational to others.

Keywords: women Education, Social issues, Feminist

Introduction

In the history of India there was many personalities who showed their contribution towards social issues and Savitribai Phule was one of the most important personalities who did the historical change which gave a new

direction to the modern Indian social and made it glorious.

Savitribai Phule was born on January 3, 1831, in Naigaon in Satara District, Maharashtra in a farmer family belonged to Mali community. She was the eldest

daughter and at age of 10, she was married to 13 years old Jyotirao Phule.

She was not educated at the time of marriage because Brahmins restricted it for the girls and people of lower community. But after marriage she started read and write with the help of her husband. Her husband, Jyotirao Phule was also a social activist and shaped her thoughts towards women education and other social issues.

Savitribai's started a school with Sagunabai in Maharwada in 1847 to educate women. After this, she opened Country's first school for girls at Bhide's wada in Pune on 1948. That showed her eager towards women education and she was appointed as the first head mistress of the school. This step to educate women was criticized by the society. But they did not take back their step and keep doing efforts towards this.

She was appointed as a teacher and after this she become the first lady teacher of India. Along with women education and empowerment, she fought against untouchables, caste and gender discrimination.

Objectives of study

The main objectives are:

- To know about Savitribai Phule's Philosophical and feminist views
- To study her contribution towards women empowerment and education.
- To discuss about Savitribai Phule's role as social activist on several social issues.

Philosophical and feminist thoughts of Savitribai Phule

Savitribai Phule was first feminist philosopher in India and took initiative towards upliftment of women. Her philosophical vision gave women freedom to thought about her rights and raise voice towards many social myths.

Savitribai's poetry expressed the pain for the women but give motivation to move out from all social restrictions and make their own point of view to live life. Her thoughts were completely based on practical work not theoretical. Girl's education was necessary because she believed that these girls would empower the women in future by spreading education.

At that time, when women were treated as ordinary object she dared to spoke against the discriminatory boundaries for women.

There were many social restrictions like women could not educate, women could not remarry. She ran drive for the equality between men and women and faced extreme harassment from all sections of society.

She did not stop herself and started a Mahila Seva Mandal to talk about their rights and aware the women about many other social issues which obstacle their path to grow independently. This was the tremendous step taken by her to empower the women but society opposed her decision.

Contribution towards Women Empowerment and Education

According to Savitribai point of view, education is the most important and the primary key to develop and identify the self-confidence in women and any individual who suffered. Because education and self-reliance are only that tool which can remove different kind of age-old inferiority complex barriers. Savitribai Phule with her husband started campaigning to educate and empower the women. Savitribai Phule was not educated

at the time of marriage but her husband supported her to learn read and write.

To give her thoughts to a strong direction she decided to open a school for the girls. This first school for girls was opened on January, 1848 in Pune and she became headmistress of this school. Because she was well known that only education can generate new hope and self-confidence in the women.

She worked very hard to run this school and facing a lot from the narrow-minded society. She became first female teacher to teach girls students and provided them all basic items.

Initially, Savitribai Phule and her husband did not have any funds to run this schools. But they worked very hard to make this movement successful and opened 18 more schools.

Savitribai Phule was aimed to educate not only girl students but also the children of Dalit community. She also involved the parents of Dalit community students in their children education by organizing meetings. Because Savitribai Phule wanted to aware the Dalit community peoples about their rights.

Along with this, she also started “Mahila Seva Mandal” for the women to aware about their rights and other social issues. She talked about sati pratha and child marriage, two main obstacles to weaken the existence of women at that time.

During the time, when women were limited only to kitchens, children and they did not have their own opinion to grow family and herself. At that time society was also believed in gender discrimination, untouchables and not to educate women. She also took step to educate and empower the child widows and campaigning in support of their remarriage. This work was also repelled by upper caste society.

Savitribai Phule’s role as social activist

She was also a social activist because her effort was not only for education and empowerment of women but also for other social issues like people with backward caste, untouchables and sati pratha.

That was the time when people of Dalit community were treated as untouchables and they did not have right to educate. They were suffering from lot of problems for their survival.

Savitribai Phule and her husband opened a school for the children of Dalit community also. Because she was known that only education could transform their situation and lead them with their own point of view in the society.

Savitribai Phule and her husband also started Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha for the observation of pregnant widows and victims of rape where they could birth their child safely.

Because at that time, they had no right to birth their child and live their life. This was the big step to prevent killing of widows and reducing the killing rate of infants. Savitribai Phule and her husband faced anger of upper caste Brahmins but they still continued their efforts to save their lives. Savitribai and Jyotibai Phule adopted a son who was born to a widow of Brahmin and gave a strong message to the society that these children also have right to educate.

She was the lady who disagreed all the social restrictions for the women and came in front to educate women as well as aware them towards their rights.

To make this drive successful she established Mahila seva Mandal in 1852 for the women to know about their rights and

generated a new hope among women. The women realized that they were not limited to household work as well as women also had their own opinion like men.

Savitribai Phule was well aware that only education could change the society point of view towards women and transform the situation of women in future.

Both Phule's observed that oppressed people were suffered from many problems and had no any opportunity to go to schools because they had to do work to complete their basic need. So, Savitribai Phule and her husband started a night school in 1855 for these kinds of people.

She also raised her voice on many other social issues like gender and caste discrimination by spreading awareness.

Conclusion

Savitribai Phule played very significant role on the different aspects of society. Women empowerment and education was the main issue on which she raised her voice very strongly. Savitribai Phule was married at very young age and at that time she was not educated. But she decided to write and learn with the help of her husband. After this, she opened a school to

educate girls because she was well known that only education could transform women positions in the future.

She also had contributed towards many social issues like equal rights for education and fought against gender discrimination. After studying her efforts, it was showed that she and her husband jointly worked very hard to remove various social myths at that time. She raised her voice to educate women from all communities as well as person who had no choice to go to schools. She wrote many motivational poems in which she inspired the people. Overall, it is concluded that she is remembered as a first lady teacher of Modern India because her main effort was to educate and empower the women.

References

1. Das, A., & Das, A. C.. "Educational Contribution of Savitribai Phule in 21st Century India". *International Journal of trend in Scientific Research and. (2021). Development, 5(4), 1281–1285.*
2. Nwosu, E. N. (2023). Relevance of Savitribai Phule's ideas in OTME-Industry Partnership for Female Students Empowerment in Federal College of

Education (Technical) Akoka, Yaba, Lagos State. *Edumania*, 01(01), 3–10.
<https://doi.org/10.59231/edumania/edmn8961>

3. Dutta, K., & Phule, S. *All India Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan*, 2021.

4. Goswami, A. (2022). Question on individual identity and empowering women in modern perspectives through Indian English literature. *Shodh Sari*, 01(01), 13–20. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7697800>

5. Kumar, K. M. S. (2019). Savitribai phule contribution towards Indian social elements– A study. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research (JETIR)*, November, 6(11), 25–32.

6. Mani, B. R., & Sardar, P. (Eds.). (2008). *A forgotten liberator*, the life and struggle of Savitribai Phule, Mountain Peak, New Delhi.*

7. Pandey, R. (2019). *Locating Savitribai Phule's.*

8. *Feminism in the Trajectory of Global Feminist Thought,*

9. *Indian Historical Review, ICHR 46(1), P86–105, 20p.*

10. Pathak, M., & Sikee, K. (2022). Sita and Draupadi in Novels: Retelling of Epical

women characters. *Shodh Sari*, 01(01), 111–120.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7743505>

11. Rao, A. (Ed.). (2003). *Gender and Caste, series Issues in Contemporary Feminism*, Kali for Women, New Delhi,

5. Kamei, Dipongpou. “Women and Education: Contribution of Savitribai Phule and Pandita Ramabai for Women Education in India.”, 01–14.

12. Savitibai phule – Go, get educated. (July 6, 2022), *womeninhistory. Women in History. education/savitri-phule/.Accessed 30 Mar.2023.*

Received on March 04, 2024

Accepted on May 23, 2024

Published on Jul 01, 2024

[Contribution Of Savitribai Phule to Women Empowerment, Education and Social Issues](#) ©

2024 by [Renu Rani](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)

4.0

